

It seems that we have to write our newsletters earlier and earlier each year...this one is being written on the 11th of November; please keep this in mind. As with all our December newsletters this one is a little longer...we hope you will find it interesting.

The cotton gin and baler are running! To give you a bit of history...after collecting **organic cotton**, a cash crop, from small growers, we planned to use a ginning plant here in **Nicaragua**, but then they didn't have a baler. We bought one and loaned it to them; then they wanted us to give them \$18,000 to fix their electrical problems.



So we started looking for a gin of our own, located one "in-good-working-order" in El Salvador, and purchased it. After the gin arrived we found "in-good-working-order" to be a **huge** stretch of one's imagination!

After several months of intensive repair on the **gin** *and* the baler, both were working! Unfortunately by then, our cotton buyer had retired. He did spin one small batch of organic cotton yarn for us to see what kind of quality we had and our cotton passed the grade! Also because the monster gin took so long to repair, our warehouse flooded and we lost about \$5,000 worth of cotton. The Nicaraguan dance... two steps forward and one step back...at least we are going forward.



The spinning plant (Genesis) is going up!

We received a grant of \$60,000 from Levi Strauss to put towards this massive project. Once it is running, the spinning plant will take the above mentioned cotton and spin it into yarn to make organic cloth. These will be three links in a vertically integrated production chain for a fair trade, organic cotton garment.

What does "vertically integrated production chain" mean? The goal is to take organic cotton grown



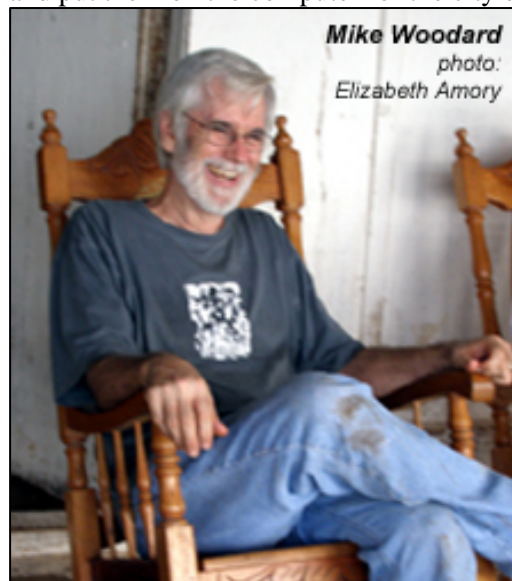
by small farmers, run the cotton through a gin operated by a cooperative, spin it into yarn by a cooperative, knit the yarn into cloth by a cooperative, cut and sew the cloth by a cooperative, and sell the final garment by a socially responsible businesses...all at fair wages! We will then use this model for products around the world.



Now back to Genesis...the cooperative has been working on training as well as construction. They have welcomed the participation of our various volunteer delegations.

We are fortunate to have an excellent U.S. engineer, Johann, guiding us in building design. For four years he lived and worked in Nicaragua; therefore, he knows what the limitations are to building a structure this large by hand. He's checked each step, coming in person for four days to design the roof on site, teaching Genesis how to make their building earthquake safe with our own

Rogelio overseeing the work. Sarah and Paul take Johann's drawings and put them on the computer for the city engineers to approve, and also



keep email communication going between Johann and Rogelio.

Overall it is amazing to see this process happen and the building go up!



Mike is a finalist for the Opus Prize! A group of families created the Opus Prize Foundation to award a prize each year to three people for their humanitarian work. The JHC/CDCA received \$100,000 in his honor! [<http://www.opusprize.org/winners/winners.cfm>]

The foundation has "spotters" all over the world looking for people to honor. Mike was in the company of Krishnammal Jegannathan, who has worked with the outcasts in India for 40 years, and Marguerite Barankitse, who won the final prize by working in Burundi to help people be safe and heal from the genocide that has taken place there. We are overwhelmed.